

SECRET PACT

Ted Koppel, ABC Evening News from the State Department --

Senator Jackson was unable or unwilling to go into details but he insisted on repeating the charge at a news conference.

Senator Jackson: I now find that there are secret agreements, accords, understandings in writing which were entered into by President Nixon or the administration and with the Thieu regime that imposes certain obligations in connection with those understandings, agreements and accords. What they are - I don't know, but I know that they exist.

Unidentified reporter: Who knows about these?

Senator Jackson: Who knows about these - the Secretary of State certainly knows about them and just when and whether President Ford has been fully briefed on it I don't know but I understand ^{that} he has not known from the beginning, that is since he took over as President about these written documents.

Two years ago in the Saigon and it was reported at the time President Thieu made much the same charge. In February of 1973 President Thieu told me that he had received assurances from President Nixon that the U.S. would resume bombing over Viet Nam if the North Vietnamese engaged in another all-out offensive. Today here at the State Department a spokesman denied that any legal or specific secret agreements had been reached but he was not prepared to respond to the question of whether there had been any secret understandings. Reliable sources, however, in a position to know tell me that certain American assurances were given to President Thieu; that Thieu could have interpreted those assurances as calling for a re-involvement of American military power and that U.S. Congressional leaders were advised of this at the time.